CROSSROADS ASIA
Conflict · Migration · Development

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Highlights

CROSSROADS ASIA CONFERENCE “MOBILIZING RELIGION - NETWORKS AND MOBILITY” A SUCCESS
The second major conference “Mobilizing Religion: Networks and Mobility” by the Competence Network Crossroads Asia took place in July 2013 in Bonn under the lead of the Institute for Oriental and Asian Studies. International experts from Denmark, Germany, Kyrgyzstan, Sweden and the USA and from various disciplinary backgrounds, focused on the role different religious belief systems play. Traditions, migration networks and the legitimation of migration, as well as the influence of religious aspects on political processes, social institutions and the construction of identities were discussed. Please visit the Crossroads Asia homepage for video footage and interviews from the conference. A conference report will be available shortly here.

CROSSROADS ASIA WORKSHOP ON SPACE AND PLACE HELD AT ZELF
The Crossroads Asia workshop “Tracing Connections – Explorations of Spaces and Places in Asian Multilocality” took place at the Centre for Development Studies (ZELF) at Freie Universität Berlin from 20-21 June 2013. The workshop aimed to build on the research focus of Crossroads Asia to examine figurations and social connectedness that emerge across spaces while being rooted in specific places. It explored the nexus of mobility, migration and multilocality (fluidity), as well as the (social) construction of borders and borderlands (fixity). The first day of the workshop focused on mobility and migration, the second day on border(land)s. Please click here for the workshop report.

NEW CROSSROADS ASIA PUBLICATIONS
The following Crossroads Asia Working Papers have been published:

» Issue No. 8: “Der Entwicklungsprozess des Islams in Tadschikistan nach dem Zerfall der Sowjetunion” by Petra Tiller & Hiltrud Herbers.

» Issue No. 9: “Coolies, Recruiters and Planters: Migration of Indian Labour to the Southeast Asian and Assam Plantations during Colonial Rule” by Rana Behal.

» Issue No. 10: “Being a muhajir in present-day Afghanistan – Views on flight and migration from inside” by Christoph Wenzel.

» Issue No. 11: “How migrants made their way: The role of pioneering migrants and solidarity networks of the Wakhi of Gojal (Northern Pakistan) in shaping the dynamics of rural-urban migration” by Andreas Benz.
Activities in the Network

**Upcoming Crossroads Asia Lectures**


**Past Crossroads Asia Lectures**


**HOUBEN, V.**: “Space, Area Studies and Southeast Asia”, Crossroads Asia Lecture Series, ZEF Bonn, 12 June 2013.

**BEHAL, R.**: “Coolies, recruiters and planters: Migration of Indian Labour to the Southeast Asian and Assam plantations during colonial rule”, Crossroads Asia Lecture Series, ZELF, FU Berlin, 18 June 2013.


**New Crossroads Asia Fellow**

Mukaram Toktogulova is a visiting research fellow of the Crossroads Asia Competence Network at ZMO Berlin. She teaches cultural anthropology at the American University of Central Asia in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Her main research interests are Islam in Central Asia, sacred sites in Kyrgyzstan, language ideologies and oral tradition of Kyrgyz people in the post-Soviet period. Her current research focuses on the development of the transnational Tablighi Jama’at network in Kyrgyzstan. For further information on her research, please contact her.

Kristof Van Assche will join the Crossroads Asia Competence Network as a visiting research fellow in September 2013. His main research interests lie in evolution and innovation of governance, with focus areas in environmental policy, development and spatial policy & planning. He carried out field research in Usbekistan, Georgia and other countries of Eastern Europe. During his stay with Crossroads Asia and ZEF he will mainly work on Tajikistan and Usbekistan. For further information, please check his publication list.

**Past Crossroads Asia Conferences and Workshops**

**MOBILIZING RELIGION: Networks and Mobility**
(organized by E. Smolarz): International Crossroads Asia Conference, University of Bonn, 18-19 July 2013. The following network members held presentations:

» **BENZ, A.**: “The Karachi-Factor: How Ismaili Migrants from the Karakorum Region Found their Way to Pakistan’s Biggest City”

» **GRIESE, A. AND M. SÖKEFELD**: “Intersections of Sectarian Dynamics and Spatial Mobility in Gilgit-Baltistan”

» **ISMAILBEKOVA, A.**: “Transnational Religious Networks in Central Asia: Structure, Travel, and Culture of Kyrgyz Tablighi Jama’at”

» **NADIMABADI, S.**: “The Islamic Institution of ‘xeyrāt’: Mobilizing Capital- Initiating Investment”

» **RZEHAK, L.**: “The Language of the Taliban”

Social Mobilization, Migration and Citizenship: Joint workshop by Crossroads Asia & Research Network Latin America at ZEF Bonn, 17 July 2013. A workshop report will be available shortly here. The following network members gave presentations:

» Hill, J.: “Instances of Social Mobilization Relating to Irrigated Agriculture: Examples from the High Mountain Valleys Straddling Central and South Asia”


Tracing Connections: Explorations of Spaces and Places in Asian Multilocalties: Crossroads Asia workshop organized by ZELF Berlin (H. Kreutzmann, A. Benz and H. Alff): FU Berlin 20-21 June 2013. The following network members held presentations:


» Behal, R.: “Transporting and Transforming Agrarian Communities across Geographical Spaces under the British Imperial System: Indian Immigrant Labourers as Coolies in Southeast Asian and Assam Plantations”


» Durdu, A.: “Spaces of Matrimony Building. The Hotal Institution in Mazār-e-Šarīf, Northern Afghanistan”


» Mato Bouzas, A.: “Moving Borders and Retaining Orders in the Baltistan-Ladakh Region”


Recent Publications


Upcoming Lectures and Presentations


KREUTZMANN, H. & T. WATANABE: “Changing Mountain Communities and Environments in the Pamirs” as a part of the session ‘Mountain Response to Global Change’, IGU regional conference, Kyoto (Japan), 4-9 August 2013.


Past Lectures and Presentations


SAVE THE DATE

CONFERENCE: “Natural resource use in Central Asia: Institutional challenges and the contribution of capacity building”

The International Conference and the Young Researchers’ Forum discuss the situation of natural resources in Central Asia focusing on the aspect of conservation versus economic development, institutional challenges, and the contribution of research and education cooperation in this field. For further information please visit their website or check their program.

OCTOBER, 2013 AT JUSTUS LIEBIG UNIVERSITY GIESSEN, GERMANY.


Interviews


TOGGOGULOVA, M., NAJIMABADI, S. & WENZEL, C.: Interview on the Crossroads Asia conference “Mobilizing Religion “Networks and Mobility”. Please visit our website to watch the interviews.

News from the field

HILL, J.: During April-July 2013 Joe Hill travelled to Gilgit-Baltistan’s Skardu district (northern Pakistan) for 5-6 weeks field research, and Ladakh’s Kargil district (northern India) for 4-5 weeks research. Travelling to and from the field sites was time consuming but an eye opener, with time spent in Islamabad and Srinagar respectively. Due to safety concerns, i.e. shootings of travellers, the road route was not taken from Islamabad to Skardu. Field research on hill irrigation system use and management was illuminating. The local population of both Skardu and Kargil districts are mostly Shia Muslim, and share the common language Balti as well as Urdu. So ecologically and socio-culturally the two sites are closely related. However, the types of intervention in irrigation differ greatly on the two sides. In Pakistan’s Gilgit-Baltistan the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (AKRSP) continues to facilitate the repair of old or the creation of new irrigation systems, while in India’s Ladakh the Government of India (via the Government of Jammu & Kashmir, through the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council, Kargil) play this role. In both research sites visits were made to the District Records Room where 100 year-old settlement records detailing irrigation rights and customs are stored. Difficulties were encountered in finding suitable research assistants (given the short time frame, and qualitative nature of the work); however, local government and other state officials (e.g. police) were friendly and helpful. Relationships were formed with the new Skardu campus of the Karakorum International University (KIU), with the AKRSP Skardu office, with bureaucrats and elected officials in Skardu and Shigar, and in Kargil and Suru, and with members of the International Association of Ladakh Studies (IALS) based in Kargil.
TILLER, P.: Petra Tiller is conducting field work in Tajikistan from June until September 2013 in order to investigate “Re-Islamisation between State Influences and Global Muslim Networks”. Aim of the research is to gain deeper insight into everyday theories of the rural and urban population about Islam and re-Islamisation. These subjective theories are seen as part of the figuration of re-Islamisation. The overall research question is to what extent people with their subjective theories, resulting from their experiences and information on the phenomenon, affect the balance of figurations of re-Islamisation as well as additional actors and influences such as the state, returning migrant workers and information from other Islamic countries.
Crossroads Asia - BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The competence network Crossroads Asia derives its name from the geographical area extending from eastern Iran to western China and from the Aral Sea to northern India. The scholars collaborating in the competence network pursue a novel, ‘post-area studies’ approach, making thematic figurations and mobility the overarching perspectives of their research in Crossroads Asia. The concept of figuration implies that changes, minor or major, within one element of a constellation always affect the constellation as a whole; the network will test the value of this concept for understanding the complex structures framed by the cultural, political and socio-economic contexts in Crossroads Asia. Mobility, the other key concept for studying Crossroads Asia, has always been a space of entangled interaction and communication, with human beings, ideas and commodities on the move across and beyond cultural, social and political borders. Figurations and mobility thus form the analytical frame of all three main thematic foci of our research: conflict, migration, and development.

Funded by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the Crossroads Asia competence network was established in spring of 2011. It aims to mediate between the academic study of Crossroads Asia and efforts to meet the high demand for information on this area in politics and the public. Findings of the project will feed into academic teaching, research outside the limits of the competence network, and public relations efforts. Further information on Crossroads Asia is available at www.crossroads-asia.de.